AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for time-stamping a digital document comprising:

receiving identifying data ~~associated with~~ derived from a document at an outside agency;

creating at said outside agency a first receipt based on said identifying data;

creating at said outside agency a second receipt, different from said first receipt, based on a time indication that indicates when the document was received at the outside agency;

inserting a linking value into said first and second receipts that links the identifying data in the first receipt with the time indication in the second receipt;

certifying said first and second receipts at said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme.

2. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital representation of at least a portion of said document.

3. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 2 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital sequence derived by application of a deterministic function to at least a portion of said document.

4. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 3 wherein said digital sequence is a hash value derived by application of a one-way hashing function to at least a portion of said document.

5. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said first receipt comprises at least a portion of said identifying data and a nonce.

6. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein said first receipt comprises a digital sequence generated by applying a pre-determined function to said identifying data.

7. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 1 wherein one of said first and second receipts comprises a user identification number associated with a user.

8. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 7 wherein one of said first and second receipts comprises a sequential record number.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for time-stamping a digital document comprising:

transmitting identifying data ~~associated with~~ derived from said document to an outside agency;

receiving from said outside agency a first receipt signed by said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme, said first receipt including a first digital sequence generated based on said identifying data;

receiving from said outside agency a second receipt signed by said outside agency using a cryptographic signature scheme, said second receipt being different from said first receipt and containing a second digital sequence based on a time indication that indicates when the document was received at the outside agency; and

wherein said first and second receipts comprise a linking value that links the identifying data in the first receipt with said time indication in the second receipt.

10. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital representation of at least a portion of said document.

11. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 10 wherein said identifying data comprises a digital sequence derived by application of a deterministic function to at least a portion of said document.

12. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 11 wherein said digital sequence is a hash value derived by application of a one-way hashing function to at least a portion of said document.

13. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said first receipt comprises at least a portion of said identifying data and a nonce.

14. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said first receipt comprises a digital sequence generated by applying a pre-determined function to said identifying data.

15. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein one of said first and second receipts comprises a user identification number associated with a user.

16. (Previously Presented) The time-stamping method of claim 15 wherein one of said first and second receipts comprises a sequential record number.

17. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein a common cryptographic signature scheme is used to sign both said first and second receipts.

18. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein different cryptographic signature schemes are used to sign said first and second receipts.

19. (Original) The time-stamping method of claim 9 wherein said linking value is a nonce value.